

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 are all the claims pending in the application. Reconsideration and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claim 2 as including informalities. Applicants have amended claim 2 in the manner suggested by the Examiner and, therefore, respectfully request that he withdraw this objection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3 under §103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 6,422,966 to Haka (hereinafter Haka) in view of US Patent 5,033,322 to Nakano (hereinafter Nakano) and US Patent 7,014,588 to Miyata et al. (hereinafter Miyata). Applicants respectfully submit that Miyata qualifies as prior art only under §102(e), was owned by NSK, Ltd.—the same assignee as that of the present application—at the time the present invention was made, and thus shall not preclude patentability of the present invention as per §103(c).

More specifically, Miyata is prior art under §102(e) as follows. Miyata's earliest publication date is February 20, 2003 (that of US 2003/0036454 A1). However, Miyata's publication date (February 20, 2003) is later than the filing date (February 10, 2003) of the priority application (JP 2003-032113) of the present application. And the present application is entitled to the benefit of the filing date (February 10, 2003) of the Japanese priority application by virtue of the verified English translation thereof submitted herewith. Accordingly, Miyata is prior art only by its filing date of August 14, 2002, i.e., only under §102(e).

Miyata was owned by NSK, Ltd., by virtue of an assignment executed August 8, 2002, and recorded in the US Patent Office on August 14, 2002. Accordingly, **Miyata and the present application were, at the time the invention of the present application was made, owned by NSK, Ltd.**

Further, the combination of only Haka and Nakano fail to teach or suggest all of the elements as set forth and arranged in the claims, as recognized by the Examiner.

In light of the above, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw this rejection.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

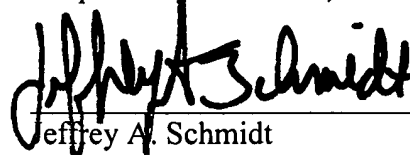
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CUSTOMER NUMBER

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey A. Schmidt", written over a horizontal line.

Jeffrey A. Schmidt
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Date: October 23, 2006